

- * doubling the flow of rural credit within three years.
- * easing the burden of debt and high interest rates on farm loans.
- * making more effective crop and livestock insurance schemes.
- * introducing special programmes for dryland farming in the arid and semi-arid regions.
- * taking up watershed and wasteland development programmes on a massive scale.
- * ensuring adequate protection to the farmers from imports.
- * ensuring fair and remunerative prices to farmers.

National Policy on Farmers

1025. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA:
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the National Commission on Farmers has suggested Government to formulate a National Policy on Farmers;
- (b) if so, the steps being taken by Government in this regard; and
- (c) whether it is also a fact that the Commission had also suggested Government to focus more on the economic well being of the farmers feeding the nation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The National Commission on Farmers has *inter-alia* recommended a revised Draft National Policy for farmers in its Fifth and Final Report submitted to the Government. The recommendations of the Commission are under consideration.

(c) Yes, Sir.

Making Patwari Halka as an unit under NAIS

†1026. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:
SHRI LAXMINARAYAN SHARMA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether a proposal has been sent by the Government of Madhya Pradesh to the Central Government that Patwari Halka May be treated as a unit for purposes of Crop Insurance Scheme;

(b) whether Government have accepted the proposal; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and by when it is likely to be accepted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (c) Yes, Sir. State Government had recently requested for reduction in the unit area for crop insurance from Tehsil to Patwari Halka for major crops under National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS). The Government of India has no objection to the proposal of State Government provided that the State Government has the capacity to undertake the requisite number of Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) under single series of CCEs for making assessment of the yield. Accordingly, State Government has notified Patwari Halka as the unit of insurance for four major crops viz. soyabean, paddy (Irrigated), Paddy (Unirrigated) and Tur for Kharif 2006 season.

Improving farm sector in Punjab

1027. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a study by International Food Policy Research Institute has put out red alert on the farm sector in the heartland of the green revolution, Punjab;

(b) whether it is also a fact that as per the study, if Punjab does not diversify from wheat urgently and more so rice, the food bowl of India could turn unproductive by the year 2030; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to improve Punjab's agricultural economy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has been working on a study "Revitalizing Policies for Food Security and Poverty Alleviation". It has Punjab as one of the focused States. There are three inter-related components of this study in Punjab (i) diversification